WHERE GREAT SECRETS ARE LOCKED UP

by EDWARD B. CLARK

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THE state, war and navy building which houses, as its name suggests, the three great departments of the government, is at once the most interesting and the least interesting to visitors of all Washington's great public structures. There are secrets in hundreds locked up in the breasts of the officials of the three departments, and in written, printed and photographic form, locked up in the office vaults.

In a sense the building is the least interesting because the outward manifestation of matters of public moment is not in the least showy. It is the most interesting from the curiosity point of view because all visitors find themselves speculating as to what great state and war matters are concerning the officials whose lips are sealed, and whose actions often betray unconsciously the fact that they are burden bearers of mystery.

It was not long ago that the name of Jefferson Davis, at one time secretary of war, and afterward president of the Confederacy was recut into the acqueduct bridge which was planned at the time that he was secretary of war. Years ago the name was chiseled out because of the pitch of feeling that existed in the north against Davis' action in advocating secession and in heading the Confederacy of the southern states. Feeling died away and lately the name was restored for the sake of historic accuracy and also to mark the coming of an era of good feeling.

On the wall of the room outside the private office of Secretary of War Jacob M. Dickinson, are at least 30 portraits of former secretaries and among them is the picture of Jefferson Davis, the chieftain of the Confederacy. The painting has hung there unchallenged for many years, and it will remain there, barring the accident of fire, for all time to come. It is by far the best painting in the room as a work of art, and persons who do not recognize the features of Davis ask almost instantly who it is, for it is such a striking bit of the painter's craftsmanship that it stands out from the other portraits, not all of which are meritorious as likenesses or as evidences of genius in the artist.

In the president's new office room in the White House, one that is included in the new part of the office building, there are today two pictures only, one of them that of his father and the other that of Theodore Roosevelt. One is at the left and the other at the right, and they both overlook the scene of the president's official activities. Some people have said that there are strained relations between President Taft and former President Roosevelt. There are those who believe that proof of this will come only when the portrait of Mr. Taft's predecessor is superseded by the portrait of some other man.

In the building which houses the state, war and navy departments is housed the general staff of the army, of which Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood is the chief. The country has perhaps only a vague idea of the duties which the officials of the general staff perform. When the Spanish-American war began it was found that the United States because of the long period of peace and because of the belief that war was unlikely, was in a state badly prepared to enter on conflict. The army was fairly well equipped, but the National Guard regiments were in a bad state of preparation.

When the war was over immediate steps were taken to prevent any like condition of affairs in the future, and under the inspiration of the then secretary of war, Elihu Root, and of Colonel William H. Carter, now brigadier general and assistant chief of staff, the formation of a body of officers whose duty it was to be to make in time of peace preparation for war, was begun. The general staff of the United States army was the result, and today it is a most efficient body. If war were to be declared tomorrow against any nation of the earth, it would be found that the United States as far as limitations of its armed forces would permit, would be ready to make the most of what it has in the way of arms and men.

Of the secrets which are held in the state, war and navy building the most important are those which have to do with preparations for possible conflict with every nation on earth. These secrets are in the keeping of officers of the twin services, the army and navy, and while they are different in their nature, they both have to do with means for offensive and defensive operations in the unlikely case that this country one day may be forced into the position of a combatant.

The course that is followed by the United States government in making plans to conduct a war in case war comes is the course followed by every great country of the world, and so no nation can take offense because it is known that the United States outlines plans to meet another country on the field, or on the high seas of conflict. War games are played yearly in the army and navy "closets" of all the great countries of the world, and while they are called games, they have a certain grimness about them that is not at all playful.

War with Great Britain is the remotest kind of possibility, and yet a board of naval officers and a board of army officers have prepared plans which will be put into service, unless the lapse of time renders them useless, in case such a conflict shall occur. The same statement holds true of preparations for possible trouble with France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, Russia and all the other great countries, and with countries of less degree of strength, importance and population.

Comparatively recently when it became known that it would be necessary to reoccupy Cuba, the order for reoccupation came suddenly. While no one knew it definitely, every preparation for just such a contingency had been made by the army board, and as soon as the order was issued, transports were ready and certain troops were designated for foreign service, and they were sent at once "to the front" properly equipped and with every arrangement made for their travel and their subsistence and with every plan made for their course of procedure when in the island.

Some time ago when it seemed likely that because of the activities of President Castro of Venezuela, this country might have difficulty with the South American republic, a republic in little more than in name, it would have been possible to have invaded Venezuela with an armed force and to have done it without much preliminary preparation. Every inch of the Venezuela country likely to be traversed by an invading army was known to the American authorities. The roads were known, and every point of vantage and disadvantage was known. It had been said that it would have been practically impossible for a foreign force to reach Castro in his fastness, but the situation and all its difficulties was understood, and it was the belief of the war game students in the great Washington building which stands opposite the White House, that Castro could be brought to terms quickly, even though it must be done by a comparatively small force sent from a great distance.

While the members of the general staff of the army make preparations for all demands that may be made on the service in case war should come, it is what is known as the war college which works out the actual problems of warfare. Officers are detailed as students at the war college and while various kinds of work are set for them to do, the most important is that of engaging in a war game inside the four walls of the room, a game which one day may have for the scene of its action, territory thousands of miles in extent. One of the last plays which occupied the attention of the army officers was one which assumed the possibility that the Japanese were intending to land on the Pacific coast. Over at Newport, Rhode Island, the naval war college had worked out the problem which would confront the navy if the Japanese fleet had succeeded in reaching the Pacific coast. Of course there were two answers to the problem and one involved the defeat and the scattering of the Japanese ships. The army officers gave consideration only to the condition which would arise if the Japanese navy had overmatched ours, and the Japanese had succeeded in landing a great army on the Pacific coast.

In working out these war games, officers are detailed to represent the enemy and others to represent the forces of this country. The "moves" in the game are watched and umpires decide which has the better of the matter. When the game has been finished the various moves, if they are deemed to be successful from the viewpoint of America, become a part of the plans which are recommended for adoption in case the war game becomes a dire reality.

In the war and navy building there are naval secrets. Once on a time a magazine contained an article which said in effect there had been great mistakes in the building of our battleships and cruisers. The article met with some approval and some disapproval at the hands of the naval experts. One statement in it was to the effect that when our battleships were not heavily laden the heavy armor plate was above water and that consequently a part of the hull, the most vulnerable part made a fair and unprotected target for the enemy's guns.

In making the comparison, the writer of the article said that one of the great British warships, the one most recently launched and considered the most formidable, was protected by her heavy armorplate no matter whether she was heavy laden or light laden. It was stated that this dreadnaught's heavy armorplate extended below the water line at all times and the intimation was that the statement could not be disproved.

As soon as this article appeared inquiry was made at the navy department concerning the truth of the story that our ships were unprotected at certain times by their heavy armorplate and that the reverse was true of one of the British dreadnaughts.

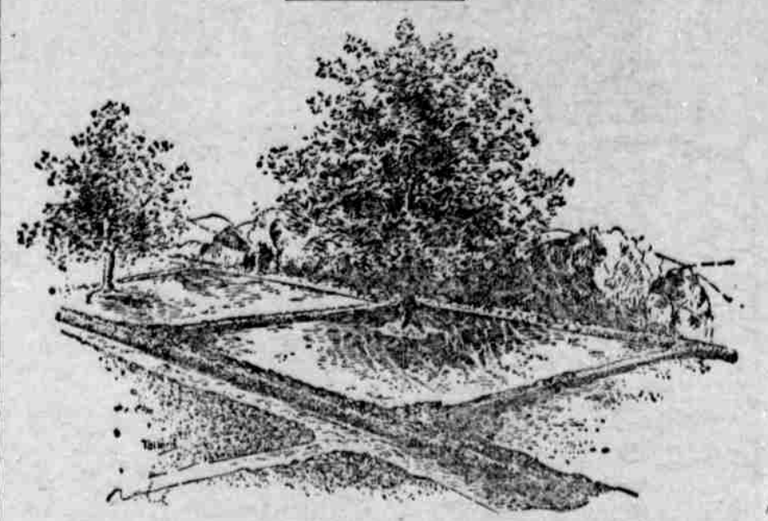
From a dark recess in a vault there was brought forth a photograph which had been secured of the British ship which had been used for the comparison. The photograph took all the strength out of the written statement.

It is probable that in all the navy departments of the world there are photographs of the warships of other nations. These are not hard to obtain for they are on sale everywhere, but there are photographs taken under certain conditions which are not supposed to be in common circulation. Some of these photographs show ships at a disadvantage, and they are of service to the naval authorities of countries which one day may engage in warfare. It is probable that a good supply of photographs of this kind taken of foreign vessels is in the possession of the United States authorities.

The state, war and navy building has its secrets, and while the show places in the structure are not many, there is a sense of interest and mystery which appeals to the visitors when they wander through the corridors. In time of war this building is the scene of the greatest activity, for the three departments which it houses are those which have to do with warfare in its very essence. The state department in perilous times has a work no less important than the work which falls to the lot of the army and navy.

ECONOMICAL FORMS OF IRRIGATING DRY ORCHARDS

Agricultural Wealth of Western Arid Regions Discovered by Poor Men Who Were Compelled to Make Lands Productive.



Basin Method of Irrigating.

(By SAMUEL FORTIER.)

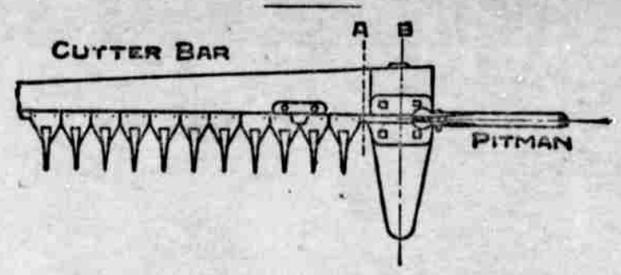
The agricultural wealth of that vast region lying west of the Missouri river was first made known by men who were poor in worldly goods, but rich in those physical and mental endowments which go to make up the best type of citizenship. Their poverty, unfortunately compelled them to make use of the cheapest methods in rendering the arid lands productive. Water was led from the nearest stream in a plow furrow and the irrigator in wet feet tried to spread it over the field by use of a shovel. The small and cheap equipment, consisting of a walking plow and shovel, has given place to a large number of implements, and the simple, laborious manner of applying water has been broadened out into more than a half dozen standard methods, yet in studying the latest improvements it is evident that many of them are mere makeshifts and that much remains to be done before the water of western streams is efficiently and economically applied to arid lands.

One of the popular forms of irrigating orchard trees in the arid regions is called the basin method, which is in all essential features very much like the check method of irrigating a field of alfalfa. Orchards are prepared for irrigation by the basin method by forming ridges of the loose earth midway between the rows of trees in both directions. These ridges are made with ordinary walking plows by throwing up two furrows or else by a ridger. When the top soil is light and free from weeds only the ridger is required, but in more compact soils and on soils covered with weeds the surface should first be disked. This method is well adapted to the warmer portions of California, Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico, where the winter irrigation of orchards is becoming fixed practise. Water is then abundant and large quantities can be applied when the land is thus formed into small compartments.

Begin With Few Birds.

A beginner in the poultry business will find it more profitable to begin with a few good birds. He can then increase his fowls as he learns more about the care and management of fowls.

POINTS ABOUT CUTTER BAR



The cutter-bar sometimes gets out of line with the pitman, causing the machine to run hard. This may also result in breaking the sickle near the sickle-head at A as shown in the drawing. By the proper adjustment upon the line B, where the cutter-bar hinges, this bar may be brought into line with the pitman, and it should never be worked when out of true, writes A. P. Johnson in Farm, Stock and Home. The proper lineup is shown in the drawing.

If the guards become bent up or down the sickle cannot work smoothly upon the wearing surface of the guards, and the sections do not lie down upon the ledger plates. The guards, which are made of soft iron, should be hammered back into position. To do this best, use an ordinary hammer and raise the bar to road position, tapping lightly upon the point of the guard.

Sometimes the ledger plates become worn, and need replacinfi and often the clips above the sickle bind it more or less. This pressure may be removed by a leather washer or bushing.

Examine the bar to see that it is not bent. Often a slight bend in the bar is responsible for broken sickles and heavy draft without them being thought of. The blacksmith can straighten it for you, but the writer's experience with such work has not been wholly satisfactory. Unless the work has been carefully done the temper will be drawn from portions of the bar, and it will soon again get out of alignment. On the whole the cheaper way is to order a new bar.

The divider should be so adjusted that it will not catch on the ground when turning the corners or when backing to clear the bar of some obstruction; and the main spring stiff enough so that it will help the foot to lift the bar, but not stiff enough to make it jump when running.

System in Strawberries.

Set a good solid stake, at the end of every row of strawberries, giving in plain letters the name of the kind in the row. But do not have the stakes so high that they will be knocked over by the whiffle-tree when you are cultivating.

TYPE BREEDING OF HORSES

Animals in Few Generations Become So Much Alike That Carloads Would Average About Same.

(By J. F. PAYNE, Colorado Agricultural College.)

During my 14 years' residence in eastern Colorado I have seen many horse ranches, and have usually found several types of stallions running on the same range or in the same pasture.

One ranchman of my acquaintance has Black Percheron, Coach and Clydesdale stallions. These stallions were all good of their kind, but they were used indiscriminately. The result was that after eight years of such breeding it was impossible to find a team of perfectly matched horses among a herd of 250 horses. Had matched stallions of either of the breeds been used, many matched teams could have been found, and the profits could have been materially increased.

Breeders of range cattle have found that they can sell their young steers with greater ease and profit if they have been bred to a type. Thus the XII. cattle were once so uniform that one could cut 50 out of a trail herd and they would be practically like any other 50 in the herd. Those cattle were bred to a type so long that buyers could know what they were getting.

It should be the same with horses bred at old established horse ranches. If bred to a type for a few generations the horses would be so much alike that carloads would average about the same and matched teams would be common.

Scours in Calves.

Scours is a disease caused by indigestion and generally comes from feeding too much dry feed without change. Put the calf on a grain ration and feed a bran mash every day for a week. Turnips and other roots are also good in cases of this kind. For cattle a small dose of castor oil about two ounces, combined with an ounce of laudanum given in a little linseed gruel is a good remedy.

Ducks Free From Disease.

Ducks never have cholera, roup or gapes. They lay more eggs which hatch better than hen's eggs. And they can be made to attain a weight of five pounds in ten weeks. But to secure the most profitable results one of the better breeds should be kept.